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RHYMES OF OUR PLANET

WILL CARLETON

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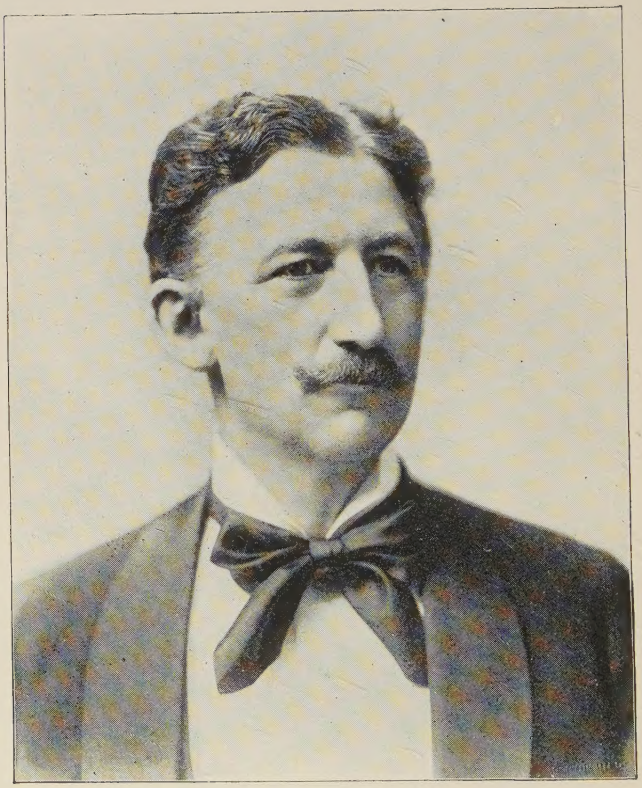

Will Carleton

RHYMES OF OUR PLANET

BY

WILL CARLETON

AUTHOR OF "FARM BALLADS" "CITY FESTIVALS" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

1895

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Dedicated

BY ALL OUR HOUSEHOLD

TO THE MEMORY OF

MRS. EMMA A. FOLGER

LATE OF "EDGEWATER," KINGSTON, ONTARIO

WHO

IN THE FULLEST AND NOBLEST SENSE OF THE WORDS

"MADE HOME A PLEASANT PLACE"

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RHYMES OF OUR PLANET

SONG—THE CHRISTMAS-TREE

The Spring around us shining,
  Has treasures fair to see;
No trouble 'tis, divining
  Why birds discourse in glee.
Delights awake unnumbered,
That many moons have slumbered;
And, all the world perfuming,
  The zephyrs wander free;
A-many boughs are blooming—
  But not the Christmas-Tree!

The Summer morn around us
  Is softly bright to see;
But when the moon has found us,
  To shadows cold we flee.
We gain the forest cover,
And leaves about us hover,
The sun's domain disputing;
  In treasure-land are we—

For many blooms are fruiting ;
  But not the Christmas-Tree !

The Autumn woods a-glowing,
  Are proudly fair to see,
Though homesick winds be blowing,
  In Sorrow's saddest key.
The color-waves have risen,
Like ghosts of fire in prison ;
Their hues, both strong and tender,
  With Beauty's voice agree ;
But ne'er, in all their splendor,
  Can match the Christmas-Tree !

When Winter clouds are pouring
  With snow-drifts chill to see,
And lusty fires are roaring
  In festive jubilee,
And youngsters' voices calling,
Upon the ear are falling,
With balmy touch caressing
  The hearts of you and me ;
Then, on a night of blessing,
  Appears the Christmas-Tree !

"AND YOUNGSTERS' VOICES CALLING, UPON THE EAR ARE FALLING"

THE CHRISTMAS WRECK

The ship flew out of her great brown nest—
  Flew over the sea away:
She pushed her sails to the welcoming West,
  Five hundred knots per day.
Through clouds of vapor and hills of foam,
She carried the star of many a home;
"Good-luck! good-luck!" her travellers cried:
"We reach our hearths by the Christmas tide!"

This ocean-city the bloom had caught,
  From seeds that thrift had sown;
And every one of himself took thought,
  Or else of his very own.
The child was peering, with Fancy's glee,
At Christmas presents he soon should see;
The man to his bosom close had pressed
A gift for the one that loved him best.

The ship she moaned with a shuddering sound—
  Then held her mighty breath;
The startled travellers peered around,
  And some were as white as death.
O captain, why does our gallant ship
Pause thus in the midst of a hurried trip? . . .
Her heart is broke; she has done her best;
She lies as the ocean's prison-guest.

The ship, with perils on every side,
  A flag of entreaty waved;
And some of the travellers moaned and cried,
  And some of them stormed and raved.
She tossed, 'neath pitiless moon and sun,
A wreck and a life-boat, all in one;
Till finally Christmas morning came,
And lit the sea with a mournful flame.

O what did you dream the livelong night,
  My lady tall and fair? . . .
I stood in the halls of Fashion bright,
  And all of my world was there;
And elegant robes were on me thrown,
And new-found jewels about me strown;
Then suddenly, on the sea afar,
In rags, I clung to a broken spar.

O what did you dream the livelong night,
You man with mirth to spare? . . .
A Christmas feast came to my sight,
And glorious cheer was there;
But soon we crouched in a shadow grim,
The wavering lights grew small and dim;
And all at once we were spectres ten,
Of wailing women and starving men.

O what was your dream, pray tell it me,
Old man with the silk white hair? . . .
I stood by a blossomed Christmas-tree,
And all of my kin were there;
My grandchild came—a girl like this—
And held me her dainty lips to kiss;
And then a wave of the bitter sea
Came thundering down 'twixt her and me.

O what did you dream, of joy or dread,
Young man with the manly air? . . .
Of her that I this day was to wed—
The one to me most fair;
And now is the hour, if miles had grown,
When she would have been my very own;
But sad she looks at the stormy sea,
And weeps for fear it has murdered me.

O what did you dream, my little maid,
With eyes so deep and rare? . . .
I thought I knelt on the deck and prayed
For lost ones everywhere;
To bless the stricken and change their lot,
Or whether they were my own, or not; .
Then Christ came walking across the sea,
The same as He did in Galilee.

I prayed, O rescue us all from harm,
With one of your million ships!
He took me up, with His great strong arm,
He kissed my brow and lips;
He said, I will bless you, little one,
Before this Christmas day is done.
And soon I awoke, and turned me o'er,
And slept in comfort, and dreamed no more.

And now the travellers wept and smiled,
But all took hope and cheer;
The selfless dream of a trusting child
Had drawn their Christ more near.
And all of the day their Christmas deeds
Were full of a thought for others' needs;
And just as the sunset trimmed its light,
A rescuing steamer hove in sight.

THE OLD READING-CLASS

I CANNOT tell you, Genevieve, how oft it comes to me—
That rather young old reading-class, in District Number Three!
Those callow elocutionists who stood so straight in line,
And charged at standard literature, with varying design.
We did not spare the energy in which our words were clad;
We held the meaning of the text in all the light we had;
But still, I fear the authors of the lines we read so free
Would scarce have recognized their work, in District Number Three!

Outside, the snow was smooth and clean—
the winter's thick-laid dust;
The storm — it made the windows speak,
at every sudden gust.
Bright sleigh-bells sung us pleasant songs,
when travellers would pass;
The maple-trees along the road stood
shivering in their class.
Beyond, the white-browed cottages were
nestling cold and dumb,
And far away, the mighty world seemed
beckoning us to come—
The wondrous world, of which we conned
what had been and might be—
In that old-fashioned reading-class of
District Number Three!

We lent a hand to History — its altars,
spires, and flames,
And uniformly mispronounced the most
important names;
We wandered through Biography, and
gave our fancy play,
And with some subjects fell in love—
"good only for one day";

In Romance and Philosophy we settled
many a point,
And made what poems we assailed to
creak at every joint.
And many writers that we love, you
with me must agree,
Were first time introduced to us, in Dis-
trict Number Three.

You recollect Susanna Smith—the teach-
er's sore distress—
Who never stopped at any point: a sort
of day express?
And timid young Sylvester Jones, of in-
consistent sight,
Who stumbled on the easy words, and
read the hard ones right?
And Jenny Green, whose doleful voice
was mostly clothed in black?
And Samuel Hicks, whose tones induced
the plastering all to crack?
And Andrew Tubbs, whose cruel mouths
were quite a show to see?
Alas! we could not find them, now, in
District Number Three!

And Jasper Jenckes, whose tears would
flow, at each pathetic word
(He's in the prize-fight business, now, and
hits 'em hard, I've heard);
And Bennie Bayne, whose every tone he
murmured as in fear;
(His tongue is not so timid, now; he is
an auctioneer);
And Lanty Wood, whose voice was just
endeavoring hard to change,
And leaped from hoarse to fiercely shrill,
with most surprising range;
Also his sister 'Liza Ann, so full of
prudish glee;
Ah, they are now in higher schools than
District Number Three!

So back these various voices come, though
long the years have grown,
And seem uncommonly distinct, through
Memory's telephone;
And some are full of melody, and bring
a sense of cheer,
And some can smite the rock of time,
and summon forth a tear;

But one sweet voice comes back to me,
whenever sad I grieve,
And sings a song: and that is yours—O
peerless Genevieve!
It brightens up the olden times, and
throws a smile at me—
A silver star among the clouds of Dis-
trict Number Three!

COASTING DOWN THE HILL

THERE'S a glory in the speeding of a horse the
nerves can feel,
Or the swift and silent magic of a pedal-hastened
wheel:
Or the rushing and the foaming that the flying
yachts possess,
Or in clinging to the pilot of a limited express;
But there's naught to stir the senses, and there's
nothing ever will,
Like the starry winter evenings when we coasted
down the hill—
Down the long and slippery hill—
Down the steep and glaring hill—
With the clinging, and the shrieking, and the
laughing hoarse and shrill!

Far above the pallid valley, hung the moon, so
safe and high—
Like a ball of ice it glittered in a frozen sea of sky;

"WITH A VIEW OF BOAT POINT, LAKE OF THE WOODS, LOOKING EAST."

And the trees were dressed in silver, and the bushes stood aglow,
And a million jewels nestled on the bosom of the snow.
But the eyes that we were watching, they were beaming brighter still,
As we packed our load together to go coasting down the hill—
Down the snowy, icy hill—
Down the long and dizzy hill—
With the shouting, and the calling, and the danger of a "spill"!

With a mile of road before us like a polished blade agleam,
On the ready track we started, in a short delicious dream;
Through the fences, past the bridges, over "thank-ye-ma'ams" to spare,
Leaping from them like a panther, in the crisp and biting air;
Past the still and lonely school-house, and the frost-enfettered mill,
Thinking naught about the stopping — with a laugh at every ill—

Down the ne'er-forgotten hill—
Down the white and glowing hill—
Just a streak of human lightning, we went flashing down the hill!

And amid the rush and chatter, there were pressures of the hand,
That the brain, amid its frenzy, left the heart to understand;
There were confidential clingings, that would never be bestowed,
On a straight, prosaic journey, and a strictly level road.
Often spirit reached for spirit, and would never cease, until
With a pang of joy it clasped it, in that journey down the hill—
Down the swiftly travelled hill—
Down the love-illumined hill—
When a life's divinest secret was discovered by a thrill!

There were maidens in the party, that to-day are sober wives—
Also lads at present living very proper business lives;

There were some that now already pay the ne'er
evaded debt;
But their spirits could not perish—they are some-
where living yet!
When we find them, I will warrant that their
thoughts will quickly fill
With the good old winter evenings when they
coasted down the hill—
Down the cold and frosty hill—
Down the warm and gleaming hill—
Where were born a host of pleasures that a death
can never kill!

DISCONTENT

The landsman through a stormy street
And shades of night was going;
The ground was paved with shifting sleet,
The wintry wind was blowing.
"Heaven pity grant, and help," said he,
"To those who live upon the sea!"

The sailor clenched a trembling mast
'Mid mountains round him flowing,
While through the darkness, thick and fast,
The wintry winds were blowing.
"Heaven save the landsman now," he said,
"With chimneys toppling round his head!"

But when the world grew mild once more,
This tar, despondent growing,
Said, "If I could but walk the shore,
Though all the winds were blowing!"
The landsman thought, "Though storms there be,
I would that I could sail the sea!"

A WORKING WOMAN

Upon a silken couch she lies,
In cold and splendid rest;
The coffin-sleep is in her eyes,
The lilies on her breast.

No trace of toil this solemn light
Permits a glance to see;
Her folded hands are trim and white
As waxen flowers could be.

The jewels' graceful golden stems
Have blossomed in her hair;
A gleaming casket full of gems
Was found for her to wear.

The wealth for which another strives
Obeyed her softest breath;
Enough to feed a hundred lives
Adorns the bed of death.

But, Toiler, not with frowning gaze
The stately hearse pursue;
Though reared in dainty words and ways,
This one was one of you.

She toiled, through mingled night and day,
'Mid careless praise and scorn,
To walk erect the lofty way
In which her life was born.

She toiled, with Honor throned above,
And Duty at her side,
To recompense a mother's love
And feed a father's pride.

She toiled, as round her thrilling form
The reckless passions stood,
To scathless keep, through sun and storm,
God's smile, true womanhood.

She toiled to reap, as faithful wife,
The harvest Love had sown,
And draw to her another life,
And bend to it her own.

"TO SCATHLESS KEEP, THROUGH SUN AND STORM,
GOD'S SMILE, TRUE WOMANHOOD"

She toiled that all the childhood-blooms
  Thrown to her from on high,
Might some day shed their sweet perfumes
  In gardens of the sky.

She toiled to kindle Comfort's flame
  In garrets of distress;
And oft to gloomy haunts she came,
  That sorrow might be less.

She toiled for you, O toiling one,
  And all hearts here below—
An hundred thousand ways that none
  But God may ever know.

So to entwine the hearts of worth
  Be these true words the strands:
Not all the labor of the earth
  Is done by hardened hands.

BRIDGET O'SHAMUS

Bridget O'Shamus, of Shanty-town,
Stood on her stoop, as the sun went down,
Shooting a glance at the mansions nigh,
Several elegant stories high:
"Look at these come!" she was heard to say,
"Crowdin' ould risidents out o' the way,
Callin' us squatters, an' more things bad,
Treatin' us worse than the geese, bedad;
Mary McFarlan, an' Barney O'Quinn,
Jimmy an' Johnny an' Patsey McGlynn,
Had their estates right on to the land
Where the inhabited brick-yards stand.
"Niver will I give up *my* groun'!"
Said Bridget O'Shamus, of Shanty-town.

Bridget despatched, at sharp sunrise,
Lightning out of her tongue and eyes:

"What are ye meanin', ye men," said she,
"Pointin' your shovels an' picks at me?
Who are you, this wid the buttermilk hands,
Tryin' to bugle me out o' my lands?
Sure I have owned thim many a year—
Purchasin' iverything that's here;
Paid five dollars in cash, I did,
Three fat ducks, an' a goat an' kid;
While the proprietor, wid a grin,
Offered to throw his own silf in;
But I'd not marry Paddy Brown,"
Sneered Bridget O'Shamus, of Shanty-town.

Bridget, as first-class evils, shied
Household goods at the men outside:
Flung with thorougher hate than heed,
Things that she did and did not need.
Threw her table, and threw her chairs,
Also most of her earthen wares;
Sent outside, to increase the fun,
Griddles and stove-legs, one by one.
"Shame!" she shouted, again and again,
"Shame on ye all, ye great big men!
Skirmish around, as long as ye please;
I'll niver move out for the likes of yez!"

"Ye've moved already!" moaned Paddy Brown:
"Look at the duds here, lyin' roun'!"

Bridget O'Shamus, as if on wings,
Flew to regain her household things;
And as she came, she was heard to cry,
"Never go out o' this house will I!"
"Ye've gone already!" moaned Paddy Brown;
"Look at 'em tearin' yer shanty down;
See the policeman standin' here,
Biddin' ye never more go near!"
Feminine-like, she turned, to rend
With his own love her warmest friend:
"Oh, ye can stand an' see it done;
But I'll be payin' ye, ten to one:
For now I must marry ye, Paddy Brown!"
Yelled Bridget O'Shamus, of Shanty-town.

"'WHILE THE PROPRIETOR, WID A GRIN,
OFFERED TO THROW HIS OWN SILF IN'"

WHEN BURNS WAS BORN

When Burns was born,
The winter clouds had gathered with the morn,
The snow and ice were camping through the vale,
The cottage trembled 'neath a savage gale,
That seemed to know the tiny priest of mirth,
And strive to sweep his refuge from the earth.
The little city near him slept and thrived,
And did not know its prophet had arrived,
Who soon should make its three short letters known
Wherever Fame a sounding blast has blown,
With silver horn!

Upon that morn
A hundred songs that now the world adorn,
With pictures it will never let depart,

Were lying deep in Nature's yearning heart.
The daisy oft had glittered from the hill,
But waited for her plough-boy lover still;
The wounded hare had suffered sore and long,
But never yet had heard its funeral song;
The cunning mouse had plied its petty craft,
But had not sent the world a text that laughed
Mankind to scorn!

John Barleycorn
Prepared his sweetest rose and sharpest thorn;
The witches set their heads and hoofs to work,
To hunt O'Shanter from the ancient kirk;
The hills began to put themselves in tune
To voice the care that lurked in "Bonnie Doon";
The world would soon a world of love enshrine
Within the golden bars of "Auld Lang Syne";
The cotter's home produced its greatest grief,
But fame and glory, far beyond belief—
When Burns was born!

THE SHEEP AT THE STACK

Make ready, my laddies! it soon will be night;
The clouds they are falling in pieces of white;
The drifts they are creeping abroad in the land,
And blanketing even the trees as they stand
Asleep in the howl of the storm.

No grasses to-night will grow under your feet—
The cattle are calling for something to eat;
And do not forget it, while filling the rack,
To grain and to shelter the sheep at the stack,
In sheds that are cozy and warm.

They huddle together the whole o' the day,
And nibble a bit at the ends o' the hay;
But hardly consider that living is sweet,
Unless it be growing, or flung at their feet,
Or easily hung to the back.

Make ready, my laddies! and think, as you go,
They're not to be worried because they be so;
There's lots in the world to forget and forgive;
We've several neighbors, my laddies, that live
The same as the sheep at the stack.

"AND DO NOT FORGET IT, WHILE FILLING THE RACK
TO GRAIN AND TO SHELTER THE SHEEP AT THE STACK"

DON'T CHANGE THE OLD FLAG, TILL I DIE!

[A proposition was recently made in Congress to effect an elaborate change in the design and construction of the American flag. An old soldier in a hospital remonstrates as follows:]

O MEN that can think and can feel—
  Who toil with the heart and the brain—
Pray hear a sick soldier's appeal—
  Encompassed in barracks of pain!
Right soon will appear my relief—
  The step of the Guard echoes nigh;
But spare my existence one grief:
  Don't change the Old Flag, till I die!

When playing, a wild-hearted boy,
  Or marching to mimic the men,
That flag was a glorified toy—
  It thrilled through my heart, even then!

I saw it brood over the ranks,
  And carry its stars to the sky;
O Congressmen, merit my thanks:
  Don't change the Old Flag, till I die!

Once, wand'ring in nations afar,
  I yielded to gloom and despair;
And Homesickness' iron-burdened bar
  Crushed everything winsome and fair. . . .
Behold! on a storm-beaten bark,
  The flag of my country streamed high!
That sweet flash of light through the dark,
  Will never go out, till I die!

When, flung on a mattress of gore,
  With wild shouts of foemen around,
I prayed to the Heaven smiling o'er,
  But clung to the shuddering ground; . . .
Like thunderbolts cleaving a crag,
  There came a loud rescuing cry!
Soon saw I the battle-stained flag
  I always shall love, till I die!

I know my last camp has been made—
  Its marble-white tent-tops I see;

And soon will the sexton's bright spade
  Dig solemn intrenchments for me.
But round me those folds will entwine,
  And o'er me their colors shall fly;
Forever our banner must shine;—
  Don't change the Old Flag when I die!

THE SUGARIN'-OFF

You'd hardly ever think it, sir,
That this big city, now astir
With every lively rattlin' thing
The Nineteenth Century thought to bring,
With roofs a-shuttin' out the sky,
An' trolley-wagons skippin' by,
An' wires a-dodgin' here an' there,
For folks to whisper through the air,
An' factories at the daylight's gleam
A-blowin' loud their horns o' steam,
You'd hardly ever think, I say,
A-reasonin' round the usual way,
That here, instead o' things like these,
Was once a grove o' maple-trees,
An' under yon electric lamp,
We used to run a sugar-camp!

'Twas just the coolest end o' spring,
Before the trees begun to sing,

With winter still a-hangin' round,
An' maybe snow across the ground,
But still the sun upon its way
Was climbin' higher every day,
An' all the brooks appeared to know
The frost would have to let 'em go,
An' Mother Nature seemed about
To take a thurrer thawin' out;
'Twas then we asked the livin' wood
To give us somethin' sweet an' good!

The han'some trees! they used to rise
Like they was huntin' for the skies!
All summer they would kind o' seem
To wake an' sleep, an' sleep an' dream;
Their leaves was fresh as fields o' grass
For clouds to step on as they pass;
While in their language soft an' low,
They seemed to whisper to an' fro;
An' every sweetest wind that blew,
An' every drop o' heaven's dew,
An' every flower that blossomed near,
An' every bird a-singin' here,
Through all the blesséd summer, would
Just gather up what sweet they could,

An' then, it al'ays 'peared to me,
Present it to some maple-tree!

One star-lit night—it seems, you know,
About a year or two ago,
But when you come to count it square,
It's fifty of 'em, I declare—
We gathered on my father's lands,
'Bout where that market-wagon stands;
Us younger folks each other found
From wooded regions all around,
An' then with genuine laugh an' smile,
We sugared off in country style!

Since then, these memory-hallowed spots
Are fenced up into city lots;
The farm is raisin' spires an' domes,
Where once the maples had their homes;
Big feasts are given, rich an' rare,
Of which, I own, I have my share;
But nothin' ever tasted quite
So good, as on that star-lit night!

We sat aroun' the leapin' blaze
That sent its glitter different ways,

An' struck the trees, an' made 'em shine
Like we was in a silver-mine;
We laughed an' chatted matters o'er,
As no one ever had before;
Until the woods, the first we knew,
Began to laugh an' holler too!

An' when the sap was boilin' there
Till we could taste it in the air,
We woodland boys, with hearts awhirl,
Each took a cupful to his girl,
An' cuddled down with her, an' ate,
With just the white snow for a plate.
You see that first-class candy-shop
Up yonder where them school-girls stop?
They've gathered sweetness there that's worth
As much as any now on earth;
But they've got nothin' that's in sight
Of what we ate that star-lit night!

An' up on Woodland Avenue,
A young-old lady, kind an' true,
With han'some tresses gray enough,
But still on earth, an' "up to snuff,"
Will tell you, when we go that way,
(If she hasn't changed her mind to-day,)

That, though the years have brought her nigh
All earthly goods that cash can buy,
She'd give 'em all for that one night
When, from the sap fire's fadin' light,
We wandered homeward side by side,
An' kindled flames that never died,
An' felt Confession's sudden charm,
An', slowly walkin' arm-in-arm,
With no one there to laugh or scoff,
Just had a private sugarin'-off!

"WE USED TO RUN A SUGAR CAMP"

OUR EASTER QUEEN

I

When the lonely leaves are dancing in the gale,
And the hungry forest echoes sadly wail,
When the rivers creep in storms across the plain,
And the mountains are reminded of the main,
When the signal-lights of Heaven to us are dead,
And the sky is but a coffin-lid of lead,
As into a room of want and weary care,
Lo, a maid, with smiles and jewels rich and rare,
Lights the scene!
Saying, Darkness is a road to brighter hours,
And the clouds are but the gard'ners of the flowers,
And an anguish tells us Heaven is drawing nigh,
And the death-bed is a chariot to the sky;—
Hail, the Queen!
Helpful Easter! there is no day above thee;
Who among the dying mortals does not love thee?

II

Or perhaps she may appear in brighter days,
With the splendors of her jewels all ablaze;
With the eyes unclouded glory sending down,
And the sun a lofty jewel in her crown.
Or perchance the frost her calling-robe may be,
Scattering diamonds on the shrub and on the tree;
Till the presence that she brings unto our sight
Makes the eye of every mortal newly bright,
With its sheen!
And she says that honest happiness and mirth
Are an overflow of Heaven upon the earth;
That the mortal types of merriment and love
Are but shadows of the brilliant joys above.
Smiling Queen,
Beauteous Easter! there is no day above thee;
All we who die—how can we help but love thee?

III

She is welcomed to the households that are bright,
With additional enjoyment and delight;

To the hearth that is death-darkened she can
grope,
And rekindle it with flaming brands of hope.
As she kneels within the temple's gilded aisles,
All the frescos are illumined with her smiles;
And she makes the rustic chapel at her feet,
To a gate-way of the Everlasting Street.
Lovely Queen,
She has paused before the richly sculptured tomb,
And has made its marble roses bud and bloom;
She has found a humble sepulchre unknown,
And has promised to its occupant a throne.
Sweet, serene,
Glorious Easter! we cannot help but love thee;
To us who die, there is no day above thee!

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

"And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed."—Matthew.

He stood beside the gate to know
His triumph, or his doom:
"What didst thou for Me, there below?"
"I gave the Prince a tomb:

"I found Him 'neath the foeman's tread;
And soon, from strife apart,
I pillowed soft His bleeding head,
And stanched His wounded heart.

"From hills of pain, His form I bore
To chambers cool and deep;
With whitest robes I clad Him o'er,
And left Him there asleep.

"Although, when morns had numbered three,
My Guest had gone away,
Yet still, I come to beg that He
Will shelter me for aye."

"Behold, good Heart, in joyful bloom,
The seeds so humbly sown:
Thou lendedst to the Prince a tomb—
He gives to thee a throne!"

APRIL'S GIRL

Oh, a rose she was, half-budded, in the intermediate school,
But her face and form I studied twice as much as task or rule.
For her eyes my eyes enlisted more than books on any shelf,
And no lesson e'er existed so instructive as herself.
She was such a slender wee thing! with gold hair and modest eyes;
But my heart with love was seething for this half-discovered prize.
Oh, she was a girl to die for, but I couldn't do that, alas!
I could only help her cipher, and be pony in her class.
And my boyish mind affirmed me full of passion most divine;
Though no doubt my teacher termed me just a juvenile canine.

And one icy day I offered to protect her
steps from harm;
With a bow the boon I proffered; and she
almost took my arm.
O that year and month were older! for
this beauty of the school
Ran, and o'er her shapely shoulder shout-
ed softly, "April Fool!"

Oh, the times we met were fewer—jealous
years came in between;
She was six when first I knew her—but
she now had grown sixteen.
All her childhood's winsome graces had
been gently trained and taught;
There were on her brow the traces of a
woman's coming thought.
I could see her mind revolving in the
realms of faith and doubt;
And the problem she was solving, what
this world is all about.
Hopes enough her soul would bury; many
prizes must be lost;
But her heart was bright and merry, as
I noticed to my cost:

For I met her once beguiling with some
flowers her homeward way,
When the Month of Storms was smiling
through a pleasant opening-day.
"Without words these blooms repose here,"
I remarked, with jaunty bow:
"If you like me, pluck this rose here, and
present it to me now."
Coming toward me I discerned it; then,
with manner kind but cool,
To her bosom she returned it, softly laugh-
ing, "April Fool!"

Oh, another year I found her bathed in
Fashion's heated light,
With a hundred guests around her seek-
ing favor in her sight.
Rushing years with treasures laden! you
had nurtured in your arms
My own simple school-girl maiden, to this
miracle of charms!
Flashing through the frescoed hallways,
how the splendors decked her brow!
She had been an angel always, but she
was a goddess now!

And my love—could I conceal it?—no;
without a doubt I knew
That my glances must reveal it—'twas so
deathless and so true.
And I thought her heart would soften—
that she pitied me the while;
For she looked my way quite often—once
she sent a wistful smile!
So I said, deluded sinner, not remember-
ing the date,
"I will take her down to dinner, and
confirm my splendid fate."
But her arm with that was mated of a
mild prosaic mule,
A small creature that I hated—and she
murmured, "April Fool!"

Oh, 'twas just a year precisely, from the
evening named above,
When, more honestly than wisely, I re-
vealed my depths of love;
Told her how with gloom appalling was
this desert world of ours,
Till her smile upon it falling made it
blossom into flowers;

How my web of life had faded more and more in gloomy strands,
Till a golden thread she braided with her white and helping hands;
How my heart had twined about her, as the fairest of the good;
How I could not live without her, and I would not if I could!
"Oh, I pity you!" demurely she replied, with laughing tongue;
"It will be a hardship, surely, for a youth to die so young!"
Like a tiger loosed, I started for the mansion's gilded door;
I was wellnigh broken-hearted; I with rage was boiling o'er.
But she stepped before me shyly in the gloomy vestibule,
Whisp'ring, as she kissed me slyly, "Oh, you dear old April Fool!"

"BUT SHE STEPPED BEFORE ME SHYLY IN THE GLOOMY VESTIBULE"

FIGHT IT OUT

Does Destruction seem to lurk
All about?
Don't believe it! go to work!
Fight it out!
Danger often turns and flies
From a steady pair of eyes;
Ruin always camps apart
From an undefeated heart.
In the spirit there is much—
Do not doubt—
That the world can never touch:
Fight it out!

Do the portals of your brain
Freedom lack?
Never let them thus remain:
Push them back!

Do not give the efforts o'er,
If they number half a score;
When a hundred of them fail,
Then a thousand might prevail.
Germs beneath a clod must lie,
Ere they sprout;
You may blossom, by-and-by:
Fight it out!

Have your foemen come to stay?
Never flinch;
Make them win their little way,
Inch by inch!
Scan them well, and fight them fair,
Give them honest blows to spare;
There are meaner things possessed
Than a first-class second-best.
Time may come when you have turned
To a rout
Every triumph they have earned:
Fight it out!

All the lessons of the time
Teach us fair,
'Tis a blunder and a crime
To despair!

When we suffer, 'tis to bless
Other moments with success;
From our losses, we may trace
Something better in their place.
Everything in earth and sky
Seems to shout,
"Don't give up until you die;
Fight it out!"

THE LULLABY SONG

I

We may smile and rejoice, as the cantatrice' voice
Is echoing sweetly and far,
And gleaming and high, up in Memory's sky,
It clings like the glow of a star;
But 'mid sadness or mirth, of the great hymns of earth,
There is none that will linger so long,
Or the heart better fill, than the innocent trill,
And the sanctified thrill, of the lullaby song!

II

We may hear the great band, in its symphonies grand,
A chorus of harmonies fling,

"AND THE SANCTIFIED THRILL, OF THE LULLABY SONG!"

As within the control of some heav'n-guided soul
It bids all its instruments sing;
But never has yet a composer been met
Whose strains were so subtle and strong
As that lyric of grace, that no author can trace,
Save the whole woman race — the sweet lullaby song!

III

In the dreamy church-aisle we may gaze for a while
At the organ's symmetrical form,
As it gives to each one the bright hues of the sun,
Or the tremulous sobs of the storm;
And the crowd presses near, every accent to hear;
But there many may be in the throng
That would surely not grieve, all that music to leave,
Once again to receive the sweet lullaby song!

IV

Yes, by night and by day, 'tis the heart-soothing lay
That is nearest akin to a kiss;

'Tis a pleasant surprise for the babe from the skies,
Lest the voice of the angels it miss;
And its tones ever bear in their burden the prayer:
"In this world, full of sorrow and wrong,
In this wilderness wild, may God pity the child
That has ne'er wept and smiled 'neath the lullaby song!"

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR

THERE's a gathering in the village, that has never been outdone
Since the soldiers took their muskets to the war of 'sixty-one;
And a lot of lumber-wagons near the church upon the hill,
And a crowd of country people, Sunday-dressed and very still.
Now each window is pre-empted by a dozen heads or more,
Now the spacious pews are crowded from the pulpit to the door;
For with coverlet of blackness on his portly figure spread,
Lies the grim old country doctor, in a massive oaken bed.
Lies the fierce old country doctor,
Lies the kind old country doctor,
Whom the populace considered with a mingled love and dread.

Maybe half the congregation, now of great or little worth,
Found this watcher waiting for them, when they came upon the earth;
This undecorated soldier, of a hard, unequal strife,
Fought in many stubborn battles with the foes that sought their life.
In the night-time or the daytime, he would rally brave and well,
Though the summer lark was fifing, or the frozen lances fell;
Knowing if he won the battle, they would praise their Maker's name,
Knowing if he lost the battle, then the doctor was to blame.
'Twas the brave old virtuous doctor,
'Twas the good old faulty doctor,
'Twas the faithful country doctor—fighting stoutly all the same.

When so many pined in sickness, he had stood so strongly by,
Half the people felt a notion that the doctor couldn't die;

They must slowly learn the lesson how
to live from day to day,
And have somehow lost their bearings—
now this landmark is away.
But perhaps it still is better that his
busy life is done:
He has seen old views and patients dis-
appearing, one by one;
He has learned that Death is master both
of Science and of Art;
He has done his duty fairly, and has acted
out his part.
And the strong old country doctor,
And the weak old country doctor,
Is entitled to a furlough for his brain and
for his heart.

A SONG OF THE DAISY

O WOULD that I were yonder thrush,
'Mid forest branches swinging,
While every dewy leaf would hush,
And listen to my singing!
Or would I were an eagle high,
That cleaves the distance hazy;
'Tis not for me, alas! for I
Am nothing but a daisy—
Though throned upon a jaunty stem,
And clasping tight a golden gem,
With star of silver crowning them.

And would that I were yonder oak,
With vines about me clinging,
Or with the storm's undreaded stroke,
My arms in triumph flinging;

"THIS BEAUTY CLASPS ME TO HER HEART"

Or basking in a cloudless sky,
'Mid dreams divinely lazy;
Oh that would be a life! but I
Am nothing but a daisy—
The humblest of the flowers, alas!
A spectre white amid the grass,
That trembles when a foot may pass.

And would that I were yonder maid,
Whose fairy feet were bringing
A thrilling form adown the glade,
That with her laugh is ringing!
And look! for now she wanders nigh
Along the woodland mazy;
She takes me to herself! though I
Am nothing but a daisy—
A child of nature, void of art,
I play at last an envied part:
This beauty clasps me to her heart!

THE BRIDES OF NIAGARA

I

A WINSOME bride stood at my side,
  Two thousand years ago;
Her face was fair; she came from where
  The South-land rivers flow.
A living braid of knight and maid
  Was clasping her around;
But now they sleep in chambers deep,
  Within an ancient mound.
They leave no word that can be heard
  By lovers of to-day;
But sweet desire and jealous ire
  And passion's fire had they!

II

A tawny bride stood at my side,
  Five hundred years ago;

Her nuptial bed where blossoms wed,
And kingly forests grow.
Mid shouts of might and savage rite,
Her sullen vows were made;
Neath bloody sward, her chieftain-lord
Had many a rival laid.
A frenzied life of love and strife
They sailed together through,
Ere in the night Death's flowing height
O'erturned their light canoe.

III

With modest grace and blushing face,
And hands as white as snow,
A slender bride stood at my side,
One hundred years ago.
She came from where the English air
Bids cheeks as roses bloom;
She went to lands where stranger-hands
Unlocked for her a tomb.
Her love was here—another near—
When many suns were told;
Yet still I spied, his soul beside,
The winsome bride of old.

IV

There came, one day, with jaunty way,
And flittings to and fro,
And laughing glance, a bride from France,
But fifty years ago.
No rill was here but saw in cheer
Her ribbon-banners wave;
This little wife re-tuned with life
My solo of the grave.
She wandered nigh with tearful eye,
When many years had flown;
She walked once more along my shore—
Not as before!—alone.

V

There came this way, one summer day,
Some twenty years ago,
As sweet a bride as all this wide
And wondrous world may know.
So many a year, with added cheer,
This pair have met my sight,
And o'er and o'er my trembling shore,
Have romped their children bright.
And these would play, and seem to say,
"The time, how swift it glides!

We soon shall see the hour when we
Must bridegrooms be, and brides!"

VI

And now each day there come this way
To view my features grand,
Whate'er betides, a score of brides,
From every clime and land.
Too well I know the pangs of woe
That follow after bliss;
And how the grave, all-ruling slave,
Will grasp the latest kiss;
But live to-day while yet you may,
O you of wedded love,
And do your parts that Passion's arts
May wed your hearts above!

THE ANCIENT MINER'S STORY

Oh yes, I'm fixed as solid, sir, as most of
folks you see;
At least the coyote Poverty has ceased to
sniff at me;
That mine is worth a million down—that
is, it is *to-day:*
What it might cost to-morrow, though, I
couldn't exactly say.

A boy in old Connecticut—this dream I
used to hold:
What if the cellar of our house should
spring a leak with gold,
And I from there at any time a shining
lump could bring?—
I've got a cellar in this rock that's just
that sort o' thing.

"AND PROSPECT ON WHAT WE WOULD DO"

The sum my father slaved himself for
twenty years to pay,
I've taken out of that there hole in less
than half a day;
If I could lead him up yon path, I'd
make him smile, at least;
But his old labor-hardened hands are
mouldering in the East.

I'd pack my mother up this hill, and
open to her view
Enough to give a benefit to all the poor
she knew;
I'd pan a heap o' happiness out of her
dear old face;
But mother's struck a lead of gold in
quite a different place.

My girl? Well, maybe this is soft; but
since the question's put
(I wouldn't tell this to any one except
"a tender-foot")
We used to climb those Eastern hills
(she was a charming witch),
And prospect on what we would do when
I had "struck it rich."

But her old father hadn't the heart to
let us marry poor,
And so I shook off Yankee dust and took
a Western tour.
My trip it lasted several years. The old
man grieved, no doubt.
I swore I never would come back till I
could buy him out.

You don't know what it is to hunt and
dig from day to day,
To strike a vein that almost shows, then
dodges clean away.
You do? Well, yes; but have you starv-
ed, and begged, and almost died,
With treasures that you couldn't find
heaped up on every side?

And then her letters wandered, like; then
tapered to an end;
I wondered on it for a while, then wrote
a school-boy friend;
And just as I had struck this mine, and
my old heart beat high,
There came a letter up the gulch—it was
my friend's reply.

"TO STRIKE A VEIN THAT ALMOST SHOWS, THEN DODGES CLEAN AWAY"

"She's been a-wandering in her mind:
the other afternoon
She went within the asylum walls, as
crazy as a loon."

. . . . . .

A rush across the barren plains, a snail-
ish railroad ride,
And I was in the asylum too, a-kneeling
at her side.

I thought she knew me, just at first; but
soon she shrank away,
And never looked at me again, whatever
I might say.
She wanders round, or crouches in a west-
ern window niche,
And says, "My love will come to me
when he has 'struck it rich.'"

No word or look for me. Oh, but the
Eastern hills were cold!
And something seemed to always say,
"Go back and love your gold!"

And I came back; and in this hut my
purpose is to stay—
A miser, with his treasure bright already
stowed away.

I'm President, Cashier, and Board of quite
a wealthy bank,
With none except myself to please—and
no one else to thank;
But nothing makes my heart beat fast—
and I am growing old,
With not a thing to love or leave except
this pile of gold.

But I have learned a thing or two: I
know, as sure as fate,
When we lock up our lives for wealth,
the gold key comes too late;
And that I'm poorer now than through
those happy days in which
I owned a heart, and did not know that
I *had* struck it rich!

"CROUCHES IN A WESTERN WINDOW NICHE"

THE EX-PROFESSOR

Along a busy, thoughtless street,
The gray professor passes ;
He listens not to falling feet :
He hears his olden classes.

The ones he met so long ago,
And lectured to, and studied ;
With plastic minds, and cheeks aglow,
And veins electric-blooded ;

The classes that he used to chide,
In accents sternly truthful,
But wish, in mental tones aside,
That he again were youthful ;

The classes he was wont to fear,
When slyly they would brave him,
And mildly dread to overhear
The nick-names that they gave him ;

The classes that he used to love,
With fervor undissembled,
As oft as he could rise above
The nerves that through him trembled;

The classes that with every year
Into the world departed,
And took with them a world of cheer,
And left him hungry-hearted;

The classes that in manhood's strife
Are his instructions testing,
Or in the last great school of life,
Mid silent halls are resting.

Though pensioned with his priceless books,
Long time his mind has nestled,
Still, back to those young souls it looks,
With whom he toiled and wrestled.

Ah me! the ancient, work-day joys,
Bring back his heart to greet them;
He says, "God bless the dear old boys!
I'd give my life to meet them!"

Sir, let your heart with hope be stirred;
The school above expects you;
You'll soon be taken at your word:
The next world recollects you.

Appallingly the years confess
New changes in our dating;
And Time's great limited express
Is never once held waiting;

And after your thin form has lain
Beneath the snows and grasses,
A joyous chance you'll surely gain,
Once more to meet your classes.

MOSES AND ANGELO

For many years had Angelo desired
To rescue from the grasping stone a trace
Of Israel's leader; who, by Heaven inspired,
Had wrenched the rusted fetters from a race.
And oft his fancy kissed the baby-face
That charmed a princess on the placid Nile;
But oftener far he felt the lofty grace
Of him who on the mountain's blazing pile,
Mid Heaven's austerest frown, received its sweetest smile.

And Angelo's tempestuous nature joyed
To march with Moses on his stormy way;
To see the hosts of enemies destroyed,
To sing with him the loud exulting lay;
To help him chide the erring, day by day,

"AND OFT HIS FANCY KISSED THE BABY-FACE
THAT CHARMED A PRINCESS ON THE PLACID NILE"

And hold above their heads the chastening rod;
To feel the spirit in that scabbard gray,
That, drawn, could pierce a diamond or clod,
The chosen blade of Heaven—the gleaming sword
of God!

But still the image from the marble's gleam
Came not to bless our sculptor's chiselled prayer;
And oft he wakened hopeless from his dream,
And dropped the magic mallet in despair.
Till, one Italian day, came visions fair
Of all the Love the kingly prophet felt
For those whom God had placed beneath his
care;
A stroke or two the sculptor fondly dealt—
And lo! the sun-lit face within the marble dwelt!

THE BOY IN THE MOW

There glides through the barn's mammoth door
A sweet-scented hill-top of hay;
An athlete, with strength bubbling o'er,
Now flings it in forkfuls away.
Another is stowing it back,
With white pearls of toil on his brow;
And, treading the hay in his track,
Looms faintly the boy in the mow.

Through crevices often can he
View, past the old barn-wall of brown,
A river that leads to the sea—
A railway that drives to the town.
"Oh, when shall my fortune make hay,
In yon fields of splendor, and how?
'Twill wait for full many a day:
I'm only a boy in the mow."

A cloud, like a flag from the sky,
Is splendidly spread and unrolled;

The sun reaches down from on high
To fringe it with silver and gold.
"Oh when will Heaven's mercy my name
As bright as those colors allow?
But Earth has no glory or fame
To waste on a boy in a mow."

A cloud in the west, like a pall,
Creeps upward, and hangs in the light;
It carries a gloom over all—
It looks like a part of the night.
With clamor the thunder-bolts swarm,
And trees bend in agony, now;
"'Tis thus, too, that Poverty's storm
Hangs over the boy in the mow!"

The clouds have flown into a dream,
The birds are discoursing in glee,
The smile of the sun is agleam
On river and hill-top and tree.
Look up to the Heavens, little lad,
And then to your earth-duties bow;
And some day both worlds may be glad
To honor the boy from the mow!

WAITIN' FOR THE LETTER

Yes, I know the stage is comin'—it will
soon be passin' by,
For I saw it on the mountain, leanin' up
ag'in' the sky;
It's a-threadin' in the valley—it will pretty
soon be through—
But the time 'll seem forever till it strug-
gles into view;
For among the things upon it, I am hopin'
there may be
Quite an interestin' letter that my Johnny
wrote to me.

It has been a work o' waitin' for a half
a score o' years,
An' I often see the driver through a win-
dow-full o' tears;

Oh, I do not have to ask him, as he goes
upon his way,
For he smiles at me so sadly, meanin',
"Mother, not to-day!"
But he'll al'ays find me waitin', as we
both of us agree,
Till he handles out the letter that my
Johnny wrote to me.

But a month ago, he halted, sort o' shakin'
of his head,
An' he whispered, "Little mother, I'm
afraid the boy is dead.
There's a lot of things 'll happen, just
within a year or two,
An' it's possible the young'un may be
waitin' now for you."
But I says, "You do not know him;
Johnny's full o' grit, is he!
You will never catch him dyin', till he
writes a line to me!"

Johnny come to me one even, an' he
twined into my arm,
An' he says, "I ain't adapted to a stony
mountain-farm;

I'm a weak an' puny fellow, with a surgin' heart an' brain ;
There is honest ways of workin' that the muscle don't contain.
I'm a-goin' to find our fortune, on the land or on the sea ;
An' the minute I have got it, you will get a line from me."

An' I've waited, an I've waited, full o' hope an' full o' love,
An' I kep' a steady strivin' with the powers that are above ;
If the blessèd sunbeams cheered us, I kep' pleadin' all the day,
"Father, when the boy is happy, do not let him go astray !"
If the storm was on the mountain, I would pray, "O let him be
Safe as ever in his cradle, on the land or on the sea !"

There's the stage at last ! the driver hasn't anything to say,
An' he doesn't smile or gestur'— but he stares the other way !

There's a man looks like the preacher, an'
I fear there's somethin' wrong—
O my God! what is the tidin's you hev
come to bring along?
Tell it quick—I'm goin' to stan' it—hand
the trouble, full an' free!
Oh — it's Johnny — Johnny — Johnny —
brought my letter clear to me!

THE SHATTERED IDOL

A TRUE STORY

On the mountains I was walking,
Where, enchanted records say,
From diffuse domestic talking,
Rip Van Winkle fled away.
Then in dreamy mood I pondered
'Mid the verdant valley deep,
Where that rough immortal wandered
To unprecedented sleep.
Then a storm displayed its molars,
And a growl of thunder came,
Till I fancied that the bowlers
Had commenced another game;
But that couch of pen creative
I was anxious to espy;
So I asked a friendly "native,"
"Where did 'Rip Van Winkle' lie?"

Then the dear old man diverted
Some tobacco from its sheath,

And a goodly bit inserted
In a trap of yellow teeth,
And with sneering that could go where
Better proof would be denied,
He responded, "It wan't nowhere:
'Twas another man that lied!"

"But," I said, "it *must* be found here!"
(With a pleading tone and look;)
"They describe it all around here—
I have read it in a book.
That so many do not doubt it
Makes its likelihood appear:
They have asked me all about it,
Many thousand miles from here.
Round the world, with smiles repeated,
Is that mortal's precious hap,
Who for twenty years was treated
To a straight, delicious nap!"

"But you see," he said—with twinkles
In his eyes direct and clear—
"I'd ha' known of the Van Winkles,
Ef they'd ever settled here;
An' my father an' his father—

Don't it look, upon its face,
They'd been apt to mention, rather,
Such a very sing'lar case?
An', now, does it stand to reason
That a live 'un could remain
Through the naggin' winter season
An' the drenchin' summer rain?
Wouldn't the wolves be apt to scent him,
An' the wild-cats suck his breath?
There'd be nothin' to prevent him
Takin' quite a sudden death.
Or, if animals didn't mind him,
Or starvation kill him—wal—
There'd some city feller find him
Spoonin' roun' here with his gal.
No—that yarn won't pay expenses;
It's too open to be smart;
An' a person in his senses
Ought to 've knowed it on the start."

Not particularly flattered,
I felt called upon to say
"Here's another idol shattered!"
And pursued my weary way.

NAPLES

City of palaces splendid,
  Richer than silver and gold,
Always by beauty attended,
  E'en if thy birthday is old,
Child of the mountain's begetting,
Pearl with the waves for a setting,
  Thou art a feast to behold!

City of sin and uncleanness,
  Embers of Passion's red flame,
Mined by the fingers of meanness,
  Crushed by the footfalls of shame;
False-visaged Poverty crying—
Virtue neglected and dying—
  Canst thou be one and the same?

Ne'er could the sun-billows quiver,
  Warm on a valley below,

Where the great life-bearing river
  Rushed with a mightier flow :
Gems in their own light are glancing ;
Beauty is blushing and dancing ;
  Hurry and tumult and glow !

Never the shadows were falling
  Charged with unkindlier gloom ;
Death, with assurance appalling,
  Always is asking for room !
Under thy battlements serried,
Corpses of cities lie buried ;
  Half of thy realm is a tomb !

When did the nymphs of the waters
  Comelier visage display ?
Beauty of Ocean's fair daughters,
  Sky of the earth is thy bay ;
Valley of crystal 'mid highlands,
Jewels of green-crested islands
  Watch thee by night and by day.

When did the ghosts of the mountain
  Kindle a lurider blaze ?
Fire's uncontrollable fountain,

"HURRY AND TUMULT AND GLOW"

But God, He ruleth over all;
  He sendeth sun and rain,
The spirits of the seeds to call
  Through floods of golden grain.

The never-weary ploughman, Death,
  Will heap for us a mound,
And soon our bodies, void of breath,
  Must lie within the ground;

But God, He ruleth over all;
  And, if His name we love,
Our souls will pierce the earthly pall,
  And bloom in fields above.

OCTOBER HYMN

When the misty Indian Summer
Soothes again our wearied eye,
Or the storm—unbidden comer—
Throws a frown upon the sky,
Still, the steady truth divining,
We may know the clouds are shining,
And the sky above is fair;
For the golden sun is there.

When the mist of Pleasure o'er us
Bids the soul in languor stay,
Or a sorrow looms before us,
Sending night through all the day,
Not exulting—not repining—
We may know that Heaven is shining;
With the eyes of faith and prayer,
Still we see that God is there.

A PASTEL

My friend was a guest of the morning train;
And once, as a prosperous town it neared,
He idly glanced through the window-pane,
And this is the picture that appeared:

A good-faced man in a fiendish plight;
His cheeks were bloated and stained with red;
He slept the day of a sin-cursed night,
A pillow of stones beneath his head.

By him the midnight's revelling storm
Sent stains to the morning's balmy breath,
And manhood's towering, godlike form
Lay low in the tomb of a drunkard-death.

And close by his side a woman stood,
And brooded this wreck of a man above;
Her brow was a glimpse of all things good;
Her eyes were symbols of home and love:

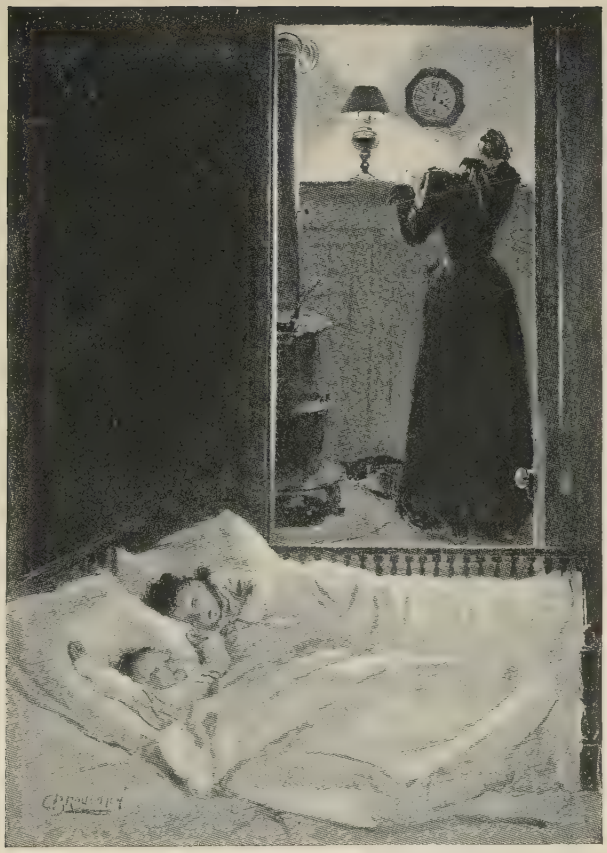
Stood close by his side, and yet apart,
A motionless gesture of despair;
As if she would clasp him to her heart,
If only the man himself were there.

She stood as maybe, if she had known
What marks the one she had found there bore,
She had prayed to God with a bitter moan
To keep her searching for evermore.

She stood like one who had felt the touch
Of needless worry and senseless strife;
Who early in years had learned how much
Of death there is in a woman's life.

She stood like one who had set a goal:
Who ne'er by her God would be denied,
Until He had helped her lead that soul
Safe up to the hill-tops by her side.

All this appeared in a moment's glance—
This flash-light picture of grief and wrong;
The train made sudden and swift advance,
But carried the husband and wife along.



"OF SLEEPING CHILDREN AND WEEPING WIVES"

For ever after, my friend confessed,
Went with him that scene of crime and pain;
Through days of striving and nights of rest,
It hung in the halls of his heart and brain.

And other pictures are wont to throng:
Of sleeping children and weeping wives—
Waiting and waiting the whole night long
For one they love as they love their lives;

Of praying for him till night is o'er;
Of listening for his step in vain;
Then searching as if on fields of gore,
And finding him almost worse than slain.

But sometimes these will vanish away;
And Faith is painting a promise bright
That God, and Woman, and Home, some day,
Will draw Mankind to the hills of right.

CAPTAIN YOUNG'S THANKSGIVING

They came from far, as well as near,
To Captain Young's Thanksgiving;
To fill him with gregarious cheer,
And help absorb his living.
For it was widely understood
That every one must come who could;
Although 'twas thought some would repair
To friends and neighbors otherwhere,
And many lived who had been known
To feast at tables of their own;
But though it was a prosperous year,
And food was neither scarce nor dear,
They came from far, and lingered near
To Captain Young's Thanksgiving.

There was no road, upon that day,
Where any one was living,
That did not somehow stretch away
To Captain Young's Thanksgiving.

From Baker's Plain and Blodgett's Hill,
From all about Van Alstine's Mill,
From Talbot's mimic mountain-top,
From Lone-eyed Peter's blacksmith shop,
From where the foaming billows ride
The Lake of Satan, three miles wide;
From where, unable to agree,
Reside the Dempster Brothers three;
Where Bogus Cave its title earned,
Where once the Crosby School-house burned;
From Basswood Grove to Splintertown,
The hungry guests came thronging down—
All glad that they were living—
By couple, dozen, and by score:
"I never knew," Young pondered o'er,
"I had so many friends before";
It was a large Thanksgiving.

Came Parley Barr, and Charley Barr,
And all who of that lineage are;
Came Lemuel Bright, and Samuel Bright,
And all who dwell within their sight;
Came Stingy Jones, and Lazy Jones,
And all the friends that either owns;

Came Tubbs, who made his horses draw
Five daughters and a son-in-law;
Came Mrs. Close, who brought along
Her children, unrestrained and strong;
Came Druggist Jack, who bought a farm,
And did it neither good nor harm;
Came Doctor Bowns, who, rude of skill,
Could both disease and patient kill;
Came Lawyer Huggerboom, whose law
Shed darkness from a lantern jaw;
Came Dodger, seldom found when sought,
Who, if he stole, was never caught;
Came Drover Tom, who drove on gigs,
And bought and sold his neighbors' pigs;
Came Twist, a horse-exchanger lithe,
And Claude Gustave Napoleon Smythe,
  Who peddled for a living;
Came some who long obscure had stood,
Because their previous lives were good;
For every one arrived who could,
  At Captain Young's Thanksgiving.

He noticed, as he peered around,
A hundred lost relations found,
Of young and old, of high and low:

He pondered deep, "I did not know
I had so many living."
Some entered with the morning light,
And some got there the previous night;
Some in the town the railroads put,
Some came by horses—some afoot;
From every place that harbors views
That relatives were mere made to use—
From where the Boston bean congeals,
To San Francisco's howling seals;
From Florida's palmetto hosts
To Maine's unnumbered birchen ghosts,
They came, with smiles embroidered o'er,
And consanguinity galore.
Came from the East a spectre gaunt,
His sister's husband's second aunt;
Came from the West, due thanks to give,
Three hundred pounds of relative;
Came from the North a studious dame,
Entirely on her Christian name;
Came from the South a winsome maid,
Of whom the Captain was afraid;
Came relatives from all around,
As if they sprang up from the ground,
To join in glad Thanksgiving.

No larder e'er appeared more full
Of every substance eatable,
The morning of Thanksgiving;
No shelves were ever more in sight
Than those, at ten o'clock that night;
And Destitution's depths were bliss,
Compared to havoc such as this.
If war had vexed the earth and air,
And two great armies battled there,
Then slept upon the field of gore,
And stayed around a week or more,
No worse destruction need be feared
Than on that Thursday night appeared.
And Mother Hubbard's dog, indeed,
Who gained his fame with want of feed,
Had here been noted for the fact,
If he himself escaped intact.
Nought could evade the common fate
That any one might masticate;
And doomed, as well, were tasteless wares:
The children even gnawed the chairs.
Of all the creatures of the farm,
Whose frames enclosed Nutrition's charm,
Of various live-stock, dear and cheap,
Of cattle, poultry, pigs, and sheep,

No odds what titles they might bear,
When Night, most welcome guest, got there,
Not one of them was living;
Zoology, indeed, sustained
Depletions that it ne'er regained,
At Captain Young's Thanksgiving!

They organized a dozen sports,
Of sundry attributes and sorts,
Replete with bold, hilarious joys,
Such as the human race employs
To celebrate Thanksgiving.
Of scrimmages, they raged in all
That could be had with bat and ball;
In "regulation base" the boys
Made daylight hideous with their noise;
Some tried the football frenzy, too,
And kicked each other black and blue;
And some the Captain's nags bestrode,
And raced them up and down the road.
And in the house were flirting maids,
And scrub-dramatics, and charades;
"They do most everything," said Young,
When first his troubles reached his tongue,

"So far as I can hear and see,
Except to thank the Lord and me:
I'm sorry I am living."

At five, or five-fifteen, at most,
The guests all gathered round their host.
No crowd e'er had more restless rim:
They fought to get the nearest him.
Young stretched his hand, with cheerful sigh,
Emitting words of glad good-bye,
Which were by kind repulsion met:
Departure had not come there yet.
A silence on the concourse fell,
That could be heard, and seen, as well;
The Captain quailed in nerve and limb,
For every eye was aimed at him;
And in each orb he, with a spasm,
Saw Expectation's hungry chasm.
At last he said, while o'er the crowd
He his bewildered eye allowed
'Neath Poverty's new weight to roam,
"Farewell; Heaven see you safely home!"
"Yes!" spoke a loud "old-soldier" friend,
"But what about the dividend?"

"For what, from where, to whom?" said he.
"It has been advertised," quoth she,
"By postal billets, far and wide,
That you your fortune would divide
'Mongst all the many friends or few
Who came and spent this day with you."
"May Heaven," the Captain yelled, "forgive
(If he sufficient time doth live)
My waggish cousin, who, no doubt,
Has spread this fiendish message out!
But he himself has brought, alas!
His doleful prophecy to pass;
For all I had, at break of day,
Has been divided, anyway,
Among this ill-assorted horde,
Who've thronged and gnawed around my board,
Till life isn't worth the living!"
And as each tumbled into space,
With clenching fist and growling face,
And glared at him with slanted eye,
And took no pains to say good-bye,
And thankless cleaved the homeward track,
And sent uncouth allusions back,
The Captain moaned, in accents drear,
"Ah me! Thanksgiving-day, I fear,

If one the solemn truth must touch,
Is celebrated, not so much
To thank the Lord for blessings o'er,
As for the sake of getting more.
If e'er again my star shall rise
And sail along in better skies,
I will employ another way :
Not only one, but every day,
I'll celebrate Thanksgiving !"

SHADRACH BROWN'S TURKEY

If jus' you want to see a chile dat's hones' for to stay,
You take delib'rate look at him dat speaks to you to-day!
I hardly t'ink you're suah to fin', in all de country o'er,
A chap dat walks a straighter crack along a slippery floor.
But often, — wid repentin'-streaks it mus' be understood—
I sit an' t'ink o' good ol' times I wasn't half so good.

'Twas twenty year ago to-night, so fur as I ken trace,
When Shadrach Brown he come to me, wid business in his face:

He says, "De T'ursday holiday is hangin'
out its sign;
An' when it comes to thankfulness, dere
ain't no color-line.
We ought to hab de sleekest roast of
either spring or fall";
Whereat I says, "Dat's well enough; but
whaih's de whaihwithal?"

De answer was, "Dere's lots o' folks
a-livin' mighty near,
Wid turkey-gobblers on deir roosts, dey
wouldn't use, dis year;
If dey would lend 'em to de poor, 'twould
only serve 'em right;
You fin' de stingies' man in town, an'
deal wid him to-night.
An' I will cook it on your stove, admit
our famblies free,
An' have a big Thanksgivin' feast," says
Shadrach Brown to me.

Now dat was not at all de way my early
years was teached,
It won't agree wid any text dat common-
ly is preached;

But Brown, he was a prosper man, an' owned his mule an' cow,
An' I was sort o' hypnertized, I s'pose dey'd call it now;
An' so I own—repentin' deep—I hope it ain't too late—
I started out to toil fur Brown, an' do his biddin' straight.

I set an' studied half an hour to make de fac' appear
Who was de stingies' man I knowed in all de country near;
An' den I made de deal with him dat night; (I strongly vow,
I hope de Lawd forgives me dat—I wouldn't do it now)!
An' Brown was standin' by my stove, at mornin's soonest ray,
An' helped undress de veteran, and cooked him half a day.

An' den de famblies gathered roun', partakin' ob de cheer,
An' grinnin' says, "Dere ain't no lack of gratitudin', here!"

An' every one dat turkey praised, wid floppin' fork an' knife,
To see him endin' usefully a long an' peaceful life;
An' wid a wink an' wid a shrug, an' wid a smile of glee,
"We're dinin' wid de stingies' man!" says Shadrach Brown to me.

An' all de festival was fine, an' wouldn't have had a hitch,
If little 'Panimondas Brown didn't turn us in de ditch:
He spoke up, "Pappie, when I went to feed de chicks, dis morn,
De brindle rooster took de cake, a gobblin' of de corn;
I had a look aroun' de roost — I peeped into de well—
De turkey gobbler's up an' gone we's fattin' for to sell."

Den Brown he kind o' looked at me like one ob us must die;
But I caressed de carvin'-knife, an' gazed him in de eye;

I says, "Now Shadrach, look-a-here ; you
tol' me what to do;—
Of all de chaps in all dis town, de stin-
gies' one is you."
An' den he sort o' wilted down, as meek
as meek could be ;
"I've cooked my goose an' turkey, too,"
says Shadrach Brown to me.

FOUR DOGS

The han'somest dog I ever see
(Said Brooks, with a knowing leer)
Was one the General lent to me,
An' said he was good for deer.
Now everything proceeded right,
So long as you kep' the fool in sight;
But all at once perhaps he'd see
A red-tailed squirrel agin a tree,
Or maybe a mother-bird distressed
For fear some fellow would find her nest;
An' once a rabbit family meek,
A-playin' the game of hide-an'-seek,
Or oft a wavin' bush or limb
Would seem for to make a dive at him;
Whatever would thus appear,
He'd start right in for it, crazy-quick,
The same as a two-foot lunatic;

His mind would probably lose its grip
Concernin' the object of the trip;
An' he'd come home, some time that day,
A-lookin' as if to try to say,
"You're all of ye eq'al queer!"

The savagest dog I ever see
(Said Snooks, with a thoughtful air)
Was one the Governor lent to me,
And said he was good for bear.
An' he was an interestin' sight,
A-gettin' the other dogs to fight;
He'd boldly draw 'em up t' the game,
An' hurl anathemas on the same;
They'd follow him straight, an' own the corn,
That he was a regular leader born;
But when the bear would ope his jaws,
An' make a parenth'sis of his paws,
This dog stepped back with merciful smile.
An' let the other ones lead awhile.
But still he would skirmish near,
An' yell, blaspheme, an' tear aroun'
The outer parts of the battle-groun';
An' pass his comrades, wounded-red,
To worry the animal when 'twas dead;

Then, spick an' span as a dog could be,
He'd say with a wag and a wink at me,
"I've human natur' to spare!"

The foolest dog I ever see
(Said Crooks—same afternoon)
Was one the Coroner traded me,
An' said he was good for 'coon.
An' he was a cur of fair appear,
An' carried the blood for a fine career;
But e'en 'most every other night,
As soon as the moon would creep in sight,
He'd chase it off in elegant style,
For somethin' less than a hundred mile;
He'd keep a-goin', an' never stop,
Until he was all prepared to drop;
But if, by chance, he could stay it down,
He'd think he had run it out of town.
An' next day, not too soon,
All covered o'er with conscious shame,
Because he had failed to bag his game,
He'd sneak it home, with a lengthened jaw,
As if he had seen his mother-in-law;
Yet seemed to be sayin', I had a whim,
To them who tried for to laugh at him,
"You've all of you got your moon!"

The homeliest dog I ever see
(Said Spooks, with an air of thought)
Was one the Minister gave to me,
An' said he was good for naught.
But somehow 'r other, day by day,
He struck his gait, an' he made his way;
He jined the family, one by one,
But didn't perform as the pampered son;
He carried a cheerful tail an' face,
But wasn't desirous to embrace;
He wouldn't go sniffin' along our track,
But still, he was glad to see us back;
He helped at huntin' an' loved the fun,
But al'ays knowed who carried the gun;
He schemed an' worked an' fought
To keep the thievers from our abode,
But never would superintend the road;
He managed to be our love an' pride;
An' when that fellow fell down an' died,
He had a buryin' such as men
Gets give to 'em only now an' then;
For honesty can't be bought!

IF OUR OLD CLOCK COULD SPEAK

It isn't a scrumptious thing to see—
  It's rather short of paint—
Its brows will al'ays wrinkled be—
  Its tick is growin' faint;
The circulation's noways good—
  The j'ints too stiffly play—
It som'at oft'ner than it should
  Forgits the time o' day;
'Twill stop an' try to recollect
  Fur somethin' like a week;
But there'd be music, I suspect,
  If our old clock could speak!

In rain or shine, through peace an' war,
  It's still been, as appears,
A member of our family for
  Some five-and-fifty years;

It's stood right there through thick and thin,
An' kept track of the sun,
An' raked its own opinions in
'Bout what we mortals done;
It's hed good watch o' young an' old,
(An' looked so mild and meek!)
Some anecdotes ther' would be told
If our old clock could speak!

It's stood aroun' at every meal
'Mid clash o' plate and cup,
An' heard us our idees reveal,
An' size our neighbors up;
It's traced our little bickerin's, too,
An' seemed to sympathize,
A squintin' softly at us through
Them solemn key-hole eyes;
It's umpired many a lively game
O' social hide-an'-seek;
'Twould score a number o' the same,
Providin' it could speak!

How our folks drove to town one day,
An' lef' us chilrun free
With self-protectin' things to play,
"But let the ol' clock be";

An' though we young uns (never still)
Hadn't thought o' that before,
We now couldn't let it 'lone until
It crashed down on the floor!
We tremblin' set it up again,
Half-runnin' with a squeak;
'Twas lucky for our jackets then
The critter couldn't speak!

How ol' folks went to church one night
An' left us all—sly elves—
If we'd conduct there—good an' right—
A meetin' by ourselves;
But neighbor gals an' boys in teens
Walked in—an' first we knew,
We fell to playin' "oats, peas, beans,"
"Snap up an' catch 'em," too;
We scattered, when, by good ear-luck
We hearn the big gate creak;
The old clock frowned and ticked an' struck,
But couldn't make out to speak!

Ah me! the facts 'twould just let fly
Suppose it had the power!
Of courtin' chaps, when on the sly
They turned it back an hour;

Of weddin's—holdin' tender yet
The bride's last virgin grace;
Of fun'rals—where it peeped to get
A good look at The Face;
It knows the inside-out o' folks—
An' nature's every freak;
I'd write a book if I could coax
That wise ol' clock to speak!

Still straight as any gun it stan's
Ag'in the kitchen wall;
An' slowly waves its solemn han's
Outlivin' of us all!
I venerate some clocks I've seen,
As e'n a'most sublime;
They form revolvin' links between
Eternity an' time;
An' when you come to take the pains
To strike a dreamy streak,
The figurative fact remains
That all the clocks can speak!

DEAD AT SEA

Uncover heads—let all attention be!
Our sailor-lad is going out to sea;
With silver gems across his faithful heart,
He silent waits the signal to depart.

And he has sailed wherever ship can go,
Through all the ocean-country to and fro;
But never yet upon his devious way,
Has had a voyage like the one to-day.

Our bugles singing softly fore and aft,
We launch the sailor in his narrow craft;
Three volleys moaning far across the wave
Salute him as he journeys to the grave.

To duty all! the time for tears is past;
Now each to work while life to each shall last!
For when the waves our hapless comrade won,
We saw ourselves a little later on.

FARMER STEBBINS AT FOOTBALL

While walkin' up the village street,
a-fightin' there I see
Some twenty fellers, more or less, as fierce
as fierce could be!
'Twas in a medder nigh to where the
college late was built,
An' not a proper place for blood to be
unduly spilt;
So, very peaceable inclined, an' al'ays
actin' thus,
I thought, "I'll try what may be done to
regulate the fuss."

My goodness, how them fellers fit! they'd
punch each other there
Like hungry cattle when the frost is
nibblin' through the air!

An' one would pick up somethin' quick,
an' run off, fit to kill,
With several others chasin' him, as
chickens sometimes will;
Then if he on his stomach fell, there
right in his distress
They'd pounce upon him, hard an' square,
a dozen, more or less;

An' when my eyes untangled 'em, an'
glanced 'em through an' o'er,
To my surprise I found I'd seen full half
of 'em before!
Young Caleb Stubbs, who once was
raised across the road from me,
But I had never thought, before, would
hurt an ailin' flea;
An' Joseph Minks, who's al'ays fit
whene'er he had a chance,
Was now as gay an' much to home as
Frenchmen at a dance;

An' Thomas Tutts, who's bein' taught so
he himself can teach;
An' Samuel Strapp, who's trainin' so's to
have a call to preach;

An' Peter Pills, who'll some day strive
to cure the world, no doubt,
Was strivin' hard, apparently, to kill an'
wipe 'em out;
An' several others all appeared to do
what death they could,
From whom I'd al'ays looked for things
a thousan' times as good.

An' what still deeper troubled me, a lot
o' folks near by
Didn't seem to care to hold 'em back, an'
wouldn't even try;
But sort o' toiled to help it on, an' make
a fightin' din;
An' even girls would grit their teeth an'
holler "Boys, go in!"
An' then I says, "Them fellers all ap-
pear in Death's employ;
If there's an undertaker here, he's shed-
din' tears of joy."

An' terrified at what they'd done, an'
what they meant to do,
I struggled hard to recollect a Riot Act
or two;

But nought appeared that I could reach
on Memory's cluttered shelf,
An' so I had, as one might say, to make
one up myself.
I wildly rushed into their midst, an'
yelled with all my might,
"See here, now, boys, this school wasn't
built to teach you how to fight!"

But still they all kep' on their way, as
fierce as fierce could be,
An' none of 'em was blessed with sense
to listen unto me;
But while I still upheld the right, in
words I won't repeat,
Th' apparent cause of all their fuss
rolled plump betwixt my feet!
An' then such buffetin' amidst the angry
waves of strife,
I never yet had come across in all my
earthly life!

I've sported in a skatin'-rink, an' helped
to dust the floor;
I've served as drift-wood in the waves of
Jersey's stormy shore;

I've clutched a tall toboggan-slide, the while my cheek did blanch,
Then, lettin' go, reluctantly become an avalanche;
I've entered cars on Brooklyn Bridge 'twixt five an' six o'clock;
But these was only zephyr breaths beside an earthquake shock!

They jumbled me, they tumbled me, some several fellers deep,
Until I gave up every sense an' feebly fell asleep;
An' when I woke, and mildly asked if all my bones was there,
No one contigious seemed to know, or specially to care;
But several fellers, with their face all black an' blue an' red,
Jumped up an' down, a-wavin' han's, and shoutin' "We're ahead!"

"Now, who's ahead?" says I, when I a listenin' ear could find;
"Whoever 'tis, here's one old fool that's several rods behind!

Why are you studyin' carnage here—
what is this all about?"
An' then they hollered, "Football, Dad—
we've gone an' cleaned 'em out!"
Whereat I says, "If this is what you call
a friendly game,
Heaven shield me from your courtesies,
an' help me dodge the same!"

Then everybody laughed an' joked, re-
joicin' in such crimes,
An' said, "Old man, the trouble is, you're
'way behind the times!"
An' then I said, "All right! I'll keep
behind 'em, if you please;
'Hind anything, to shield me from such
goin's on as these;
An' when I'm anxious suddenly from this
world to escape,
I'll go an' dance on dynamite, an' do it
up in shape!"

FORECLOSING OF THE MORTGAGE

Sheriff, you must mind your duty;
  But go softly, too, I pray,
For this home has magic beauty,
  Now we see it fade away!
Every wall has throbs of feeling,
  Every nook holds memories fair—
All was built, from floor to ceiling,
  With the hands of love and prayer!

Long I labored for its keeping—
  This one star that gemmed my sky;
'Tis a grief that mocks at weeping—
  Losing heaven before I die!
I could fight when well and younger;
  But a fiendish pain and dread

'Tis, to see your children's hunger,—
Lying helpless on a bed!

Wife, let hope and courage calm you;
Darkest days are soonest past;
I have tried to keep this from you,
But it had to come, at last!
All your heart is crushed with sorrow,
Though your hands are hard with toil;
'Twas a dream with sad to-morrow—
'Twas a home too sweet to spoil!

'Twill not all be cloudy weather:
Some day, I may meet the debt,
And again in joy together
We will prosper, even yet!
Or if Death, around us sweeping,
Numbs my poor but faithful arm,
There is One within whose keeping
You may live, secure from harm.

Mother, for the care you gave me,
This is poor and hard reward;
You the slightest pang would save me,
Humbly leaning on your Lord.

"LET MY LIFE BE UNDERSTOOD"

He has said that on some Morrow
That no Present can destroy,
He will make your tears of sorrow
Freshen glowing fields of joy.

Baby in the cradle nesting,
God's own smile upon your brow—
May He grant that all your resting
May be pure and sweet as now!
May your sisters and your brother,
Now half knowing what they see,
Be more comfort to your mother
Than her husband e'er could be!

Sheriff, with a word I task you:
Let my life be understood;
Tell my comrades, if they ask you,
That I did the best I could.
Tell the man my hands are owing,
That I hourly beg and pray
He may ne'er have means of knowing
How my heart is wrenched to-day!

A SAINT'S LOVE

I

The mountain city, fair Jerusalem,
Was sweetly smiling at a faultless sky,
As if she had not, two short years ago,
Condemned the king of every gentle thought.
She had forgot the thunders of that day—
She had forgot the judgments of the past;
And pondered not of future prophecies.
Her ships were full of gold-enticing wares,
Her roads were pressed by multitudes of feet,
Her marble shone like snow-drifts in the sun,
Her domes were braced against the lofty breeze.

And through her gates the heavy camel-trains
Came loaded with the wealth of all the lands;
And at his door the merchant-spider stood,
And spun his webs for hurried passers by.
Before the shrines were countless worshippers,
Who prayed for strength to Israel's distant God;

Beneath the shade of gayly decked bazaars,
Or in the depths of rock-protected homes,
Were maids, the germs of future womanhood,
The links of generations soon to live.

And on the mountain's south and western edge,
A shapely, marble hill-top of itself,
The Temple threw aloft its gleaming prayers.
The Temple, book of precious history,
Imperious offspring of three thousand years,
Cathedral of the faith of Abraham,
Proud, pious Israel's architectural soul!

But close beside this splendor was a camp;
And in the camp a Roman legion lived;
And in their grasp were Gentile barbs and blades;
And in their steely eyes a glittering sneer,
Whene'er they saw an angry Jewish brow
Upturned to them with pious, murderous hate.

Now up a narrow street there strode a man,
Whose knitted frame, while not of largest mould,
Upheld a face that seemed to seek the sky,
And bade the careless traveller twice to look,
As at a signal on the mountain-top.

His eyes like eagles flew from point to point,
And grasped for prey such morsels as they would,
And bore them to his mind to feed upon ;
His age was that where youth has late begun
To keep the step in manhood's sturdy march ;
His tread was not the undecided lope
Of him whose body staggers with his mind,
'Twas not the open and indefinite halt,
That goes with him whose journeys are for sale ;
'Twas not the cloddish foot-fall of the serf :
It was the progress of a leader born.

Yet there was that upon his thoughtful brow,
That seemed to speak of some unearthly force
That led and drove him on ; and oft he gazed
To where the Temple hailed the distant sun,
And thence to God's blue temple in the sky,
And seemed to trumpet from his soul a prayer.

Now striding through an ornamented gate,
He, turning, passed a mansion's burnished walls.
Within the court a garden flashed its smiles,
Where all the sweetest flowers of Palestine
Were rivalled by their foreign floral guests.

And fairest of them all, a maiden sat,
Whose cheeks were roses when he met her sight.

With tender heart and wistful melting glance,
Most brilliant she of all the Chosen Land;
And yet beneath the garden of her smiles
A granite purpose held her life in place,
As those whose nerves were students might discern.

"Once more your pulse is beating, like the flow
Of torrents down the mountain-side," she said,
Her jewelled fingers clambering o'er his wrist.
"Why do you set the heart at liberty,
Until the body trembles like a slave?
Rest, now, for me!" and then her round white arm
Across his shoulder flung a soothing weight;
Like breezes cool her hand caressed his brow.

"I rest?"—he laughed a bitter little moan,
Until his changeful eyes were turned to black.
"Rest?—not until I do my day's work out.
Rest?—not until my task is 'neath my feet.

"I am a Roman, born of Jewish blood,
A child of God, but serving under gods;

A Jew in soul—a heathen by the law;
So being both, I hold a bounden right
To bring them both together.

"I some day
Will stand in Rome, where every thing's a god;
Where War, and Peace, and Love, and Hate, and
Toil,
And Wickedness, must each one have its god;
Where e'en the Emperor must be a god.
If this man live, 'twas ordered by a god—
If that man die, he's murdered by a god—
If a slave sneeze, 'tis to amuse a god!
How think you that The Only God is pleased
At all this god-play? I, descendant true
Of him who walked with Him, will some day
stand
In Rome's unhallowed marble palaces,
And with the sword of eloquence will smite
Those images from off their sculptured crags!"

She from his shoulder took her shapely arm,
And drawing just away, she gazed at him
Half-worshipping the spirit in his face;
And then her love surged back; and pettingly

She laughed an answer thus: "But, valiant one,
Rome never much has cared for orators,
Much less for prophets with the Jewish faith;
What if on them your eloquence shall fall
Like shooting-stars extinguished in the night?"—

He threw his hand where soldiers bear the blade:
"If they'll not hear the silver of my tongue,
They shall be given the steel clank of my sword!
For I will be Lieutenant to our God,
And rally all His world to His campaigns!"

She paled, and looked beseechingly. "Oh no!"
She murmured; "no! our race already tires
With loss of blood—pray God for rest and peace!
But woful 'tis, when Zion stabs herself!
What Jews were those that Jews have doomed
to-day?"

"Fanatics, lunatics, and rogues," said he:
"Their leader for his smartness suffered death
Not many suns ago. One might have thought
The farce would close, the foremost harlequin
Being given the leading part in tragedy;
But thistles clench their roots into the ground;—

If crushed, their every fragment is a germ.
His followers now appear on every side,
And claim he was a king, this ragged knave!
And yesterday one gazed up towards the sky
Like some sand-boor to see what hour it is,
And claimed he saw his hang-dog leader there
Standing with God! blasphemer—idiot—knave—
He'll soon be sent where he can view more near
The mysteries of the future!"

Now there crept
Within the sight a woman whose gray hair
Was trembling round a grief-disfigured face;
Her hands were seared with days and nights of toil,
Her eyes were wells of sorrow. And she kneeled,
This agéd woman, to this youthful man.
A bloodless face seemed even to beg for tears,
As with her faded lips she moaned:

"Strong man,
Lend somewhat of your strength unto the weak,
And God will pay you interest o'er and o'er!
My living son is borne unto his grave!
Through yonder Eastern gate they drag him now,

Their countryman—to murder him with stones,
To stain his dear form and his pure good face
With his own blood; O good sir, you are strong—
Whate'er you cry, the headlong crowd will hear;
Come, come and save a life—and such a life!"

"What was his crime?" the maiden softly said.
"His crime, sweet lady? being good and true,
And fair, and just; to help the starving poor;
To take me, poor old woman, in his arms,
(While youthful beauties leered and tossed their heads,)
Because I was his mother! to have kept
The kisses that I gave him when a child—
To pay each pain or pound I bore for him,
Back, with a million for sweet usury;
To clothe his father's name with honors new"—

"And then blaspheme against his father's God.
And mate him with a scoundrel!" thus broke in
The stronger voice.

Whereat the faded eye
Grew deep again—the bended form upraised,
And from the withered lips there came a hiss.

"'Tis slander!" loud she cried: "He but obeyed
His Master's orders, when in Heaven he saw
The Father reunited with His Son.
He, with the flaming colors of his speech,
Painted the picture for the multitudes—
For multitudes of every age to come!"

"And did his best to crush the solemn laws
That have been throned upon these sacred hills
For centuries!" Thus said the zealous man,
In tones of hate.

"A few scant centuries!"
The wrinkled face took shadows of contempt.
"A million ages had that only Son
Reigned with His Father, and will millions more!"

"Hiss in the street, she-viper!" cried the man.
"Creep through the Eastern gate, and see your young
Bruised with stone curses of the sacred hills!
Blasphemer, go!"

"Nay, hold," the maiden said;
"This is no serpent—she is womanly,

"HURLED WORDS AT HIM HE NE'ER WAS TO FORGET"

And she is old. And she is in a home
Where age must have its rights, though in the wrong.
Rest, grieving mother; you are worn and tired."

Once more the old heart caught at human hope.
She clasped the pitying maiden round her knees,
And sinking humbly in the garden's dust—
A withered, trampled weed—"My child," she cried,
"He loves you; beg him, bid him now be kind,
And help my boy!"

The sturdy lover laughed,
And striding toward the noisy street, he cried,
"I go to help him to the heaviest stone!"

"Then with you, granite-hearted man," she cried,
"Take an old woman's curse! So stay you there
While 'tis delivered!" And he stood as those
One sees to-day, within magnetic chains;
But round his neck the maiden bent her arms,
As for a shield; and then the crone sublime
Hurled words at him he ne'er was to forget:

[THE CRONE'S CURSE]

"You have ambition; soon you hope to stand
A tower among the rulers of the land?
A cherished comrade with the rich and great—
A growing crescent in the skies of state?
The dregs of squalor through your life shall flow,
Your fortunes match the lowest of the low.

"This maiden with the sweet and thrilling form,
This girl, with angels whispering through her face,
You hope to press in passion's wildering storm,
And feel from her a loving wife's embrace?
No need to tell you if her love endures;
For true or false, she never shall be yours.

"Away from her you foreign skies shall view
Amid the change your restless nature craves.
The storm will crush the ship that shelters you,
And drag you weak and trembling through the waves;
Your port will be a wreck-infested strand,
And clinging vipers greet you when you land.

"And you some time will proudly stand in Rome?
And you will speak to her a mighty word?
That shining place shall some day be your home,
And feel your voice in hut and palace heard;
But you shall live in poverty and chains,
And die a headless convict for your pains."

Now while this curse on wings of prophecy
Was hissing through the air, the weeping maid
Unwound her arms from off the lover's neck,
And grovelled at the agéd woman's feet,
Beseeching her to change the awful doom.
The man grew white, till he resembled most
Some corpse that died with sneers upon its lips;
But still he clenched his teeth, and cried, "I go
That this blasphemer have not burial given;
He shall be spread to grace the raven's feast—
The dining-table of the carrion crow!"

Once more the agéd woman's eyes were fired
With borrowed light; "but hold again!" she cried:
"I have a blessing for you!"

And he paused,
And waited, in defiance of himself,
Less prone to take her blessing than her curse.

[THE CRONE'S BLESSING]

"A million men and many millions more,
And millions that have never yet been born,
Will fly the fallen banner, o'er and o'er,
That now is dragged in foaming gulfs of scorn;
The power of God upon their lives will fall,
And you shall be the favored of them all.

"A soothing angel, ready everywhere,
Shall go with you and be your fellow-guest,
To cure the sick with tender magic care,
Whene'er your gifted soul may make request;
Beneath your touch the most ungainly things
Shall turn to birds with healing in their wings.

"A thousand nations out of darkness led,
Will note the hour when first your name they knew;
With wreaths of blessings be adorned your head,
And lofty, glittering temples named for you;

Wherever Sin can weep and Hope rejoice,
The wakened heart will hear your helpful voice.

"And you will prove, all mortal men above,
The maxim and its oft-disputed worth,
That those immortal sisters, Law and Love,
Can live and rule together on the earth;
In Christian tents that you have builded well,
Justice and Mercy can together dwell.

"To you Heaven's door shall swiftly open be
As to my blessed though murdered son to-day;
Your eyes the martyred Master then shall see,
Surrounded by the everlasting ray;
And some time you my angel son shall view,
And pray to God and him to pardon you."

And then her struggling flame of prophecy
Went back to Heaven; she slowly drooped and fell,
A clod of senseless clay upon the earth.

The maiden bent o'er the pathetic wreck,
As if to whisper, "You were once a maid."
And soon must be a maid in spirit-land;
Pity and reverence both are due to you."

But with a gesture in itself a curse,
The man, as one of fetters late released,
Stalked wildly from the mansion to the road,
And shouted, "Stone the ranting knave to death!"

II

The mountain city, fair Jerusalem,
Was crouching 'neath a black and stormy sky;
The madly charging squadrons of the storm
Made war between the hills of Palestine;
The dark-faced clouds were skulking to and fro,
Like ghosts in black, predicting pain and death.

The narrow streets were made to river-beds;
The sheltering walls themselves for shelter prayed;
The Temple crouched beneath the liquid weight,
And seemed to hide its stone phylacteries,
And, sinner-like, to shrink away from Heaven;

And now and then there fell a noon-day flash,
From giant flames whose kindling was a cloud,
That seemed to set the very floods afire;
And soon a lengthened peal, as if the sky
Were crushed to atoms by the stroke of God.

Within a dainty room, whose every wall
Was but a mirror of its owner's thought,
Whose colors, folds, and attitudes, and tints,
Were silent whispers of a perfect taste,
Where e'en the softly perfumed air was thrilled
With emanations from a star-born soul,
Our maiden sat, unfrightened at the storm,
Her hands tight clasped, as if to those of God.

A servant came, her face a pall of fear,
A dingy packet in her fingers grasped:
"A rough, fierce-looking, strange, and drenched
old man,
With but a desert blanket for his garb,"
She murmured, "brought this letter here for you,
And said, "Expect me in to-morrow's storm,
Bound for the sweetness of my desert home.
These lines will breed an answer; give it me,"
Then he was gone as if into the earth.

She whom the storm had never once appalled,
Now trembled as she broke the seal, and read:

"Sweet one, of whom I every hour have mused,
Whose sacred name is like a golden strand
Throughout the texture of my every thought,
I greet you.

"O that I to-day could bow
My troubled head beneath your soothing hand,
And tell you all my startled eyes have seen—
My ears have heard—my quickened heart has felt!

"And first I beg, sweet solace of my life,
That you will seek the mother of the man
We stoned to death a few long weeks ago;
Give her scant days the sunshine of your smile,
And guard her life from every want and care.
I will repay.

"You know how brave I was,
When going forth upon a safe campaign
To vindicate the majesty of God.
Though something whispered, 'There be grander
deeds

Than riding well protected to the hunt
Of men and women who will not resist
Or even fly!'

"We went our haughty way,
Amid the clang of Jewish battle-hymns,
And often songs that Israel would have scorned.
We talked about the glory of the times
When Joshua vaulted conquering through the land;
But oft I found myself in waves of thought
My troubled mind was striving hard to breast;
And oft I rode dejected and alone;
And when we camped at night, my spirit roved
Without a tether, up and down the earth,
And through the past and future; oft in fear
I called aloud your name; but you were gone.
This grand triumphal march of victory
Became the saddest journey of my life!

"Now near the Garden City of the North,
Just when we first beheld its spires and domes,
Whose jewelry flashed in the mid-day sun,
There swept on us a blinding wave of light—
A billow that resisted all defence—

More luminous than ever yet I saw,
As does the sun-fire dim the glowworm's lamp;
My body found a lodgement in the dust;
I somehow knew that grieved, indignant Heaven
Had struck me down; and blinded, weak, and prone,
But resolute to suffer and endure,
I lay and waited what might hap to me.

"Then there came walking o'er the surging waves
Of my sad heart, the One they crucified,
But thirty moons ago. I cannot say
I saw Him with my eyes—yet many times
As well as if I saw Him with my eyes
I knew Him as the King they crucified!
He did not trample on me, but instead
Looked down at me with sad and streaming eye,
As one would at an erring brother loved,
And asked me why I persecuted Him.
And then my heart knelt to Him, and I said
'King, I surrender; tell me what to do.'

"He sent me, humbled, blinded, to His friends—
The ones I came to kill; and they reached out

And took me to their hearts, and succored me;
And nursed me back to health and light once more.

"And then I sought the desert-land; and here,
Beneath the cloud-ceiled roofing of the sky,
With barren rocks and mountains for my walls,
Became a hermit; and throughout the day
I pray to God that He will pardon me
For all the grievous sins that I have done.

"But when night falls, I creep into a cave,
And sleep amid the stillness; then there sweep
Along the crystal highways of the air
Angels by thousands; and they sing such songs,
So full of peace, good-will, and love to men,
That tears of joy come streaming down my cheeks.
And at their head is still my wounded Prince,
Who whispers words of comfort in my ear.
Oh, I could stay forever, dearest one,
If but my peace and joy were shared by you—
Could you but be my sweetest angel guest!

"But Christ last night came, not with words of peace,
But with a sword; and, trumpet like, He spoke

And called to me, 'To arms! the time has come
When you must hasten forth into the world,
And fight my battles with the enemy,
And strive with men to place their hearts with me.
You will be thrown in prison, chained, and scourged,
And suffer many a loathsome death for me;
So, are you strong enough to take the toil?'
I whispered Him, 'My days and nights are thine!'

"So, soon my life's employment will begin.
And O, my true one! if your heart can know
And love the Prince I love, what happiness
Will flood my heart, e'en 'midst the woe and pain
That follow one who lifts a humble cause!"

Soon o'er the desert, through the mountain-pass
This answer to the waiting hermit went:

"Loved one, still loved—our Great Jehovah knows
That all my heart and soul have followed you;
Would faithful follow you for evermore—
Through sickness and the blackest gates of death,
If only you would serve our father's God.
O strong one! do not let a pang of pain,

"I WHISPERED HIM, 'MY DAYS AND NIGHTS ARE THINE!'"

A sunstroke 'mid a journey's new fatigue,
A fancied vision, and a troubled dream,
A bit of kindness from a wayward sect
Who subtly plot for favors back again,
Trap you away from roads of rectitude!
Let not that still and treacherous desert-land
Deceive you with its weird and ghostly tongues;
Come back to God, here in His ancient home;
Come back to me! your life shall be as smooth
As love and wealth can serve to render it;
Not in the whirling cataracts of strife,
But sailing on a wide, though placid sea,
Together will we make for splendid ports—
Fling wide the streamers your ambition paints,
Bear blesséd merchandise from man to man,
Then find our sky again beyond the clouds,
Outlive all death, and join the brave and true
Who dwell in our mysterious Fatherland,
Of which we seldom speak, but think so oft!

"But if you still must hold this phantom dream,
And blindly toil in hope that it come true,
We then for evermore must walk apart,
Until the voice of God has bid you wake—
And this new-fallen darkness leaves your eyes."

The desert-lodger knew too well the firm
Though bending nature of the maid he loved,
Which yielded in the breeze of common things,
To stand more firmly 'gainst the driving blast,
And cling unflinching to the ancient soil
In which her soul was planted at its birth.
Her, having learned in blindnesses of love,
He studied o'er with eyes of solitude;
He knew the lyric of his life was sung,
And the rough epic measures must begin.
With teeth firm clenched, above a wounded heart,
He whispered to himself, "The word is coined;
Henceforth our honest ways must lie apart!"
And then he knelt, and wept, and prayed for strength.

III

The monarch-city, proud and haughty Rome,
Was trembling with an extra thrill to-day;
Another Christian came to doff his head!
A not uncommon happening, to be sure;
But with the head a massive brain would fall,
And with the brain a warm magnetic heart;

And with the heart a voice whose every tone
Had sent its clear vibrations through the world.
Of all the seas of blood that Rome had sailed,
Was now the choicest billow soon to flow!

The Christians of the god-bespangled town
Were sobbing in their stony dens of prayer,
And not one weary second of the day
But saw a supplication start for Heaven.
They knew that he was doomed to worlds of bliss,
But felt they could not spare him here on earth.

And humanly they could but pity him,
And, rising to congratulate his soul,
They fell in grief before his body's wounds.
And so their eyes, enkindled by his faith,
Were blinded by the blood so soon to flow.

And enemies there were that pitied him
Whose silver tongue had thrilled the hearts of Rome,
Whose house had been the tourist's wonder-place,
Whose shackled life set heavy spirits free—
Whose strongest chains were only ropes of dust—
Who made a forum of his prison-cell.

It was to them at least an idle grief
To see this man of god-like faculties
Wear, travelling through the country of the shades,
The crimson mantle of his own heart's blood.

Aye, he was told, by those who crept in power,
There e'en was whispering from the emperor,
That if the Christian faith he would deny,
And give obedience to the Roman gods—
Nay, let him but go back to Jewish creeds,
Let him e'en throw aside the upstart faith,
And trample on the doctrines he had preached,
And change his heart — his head might yet be saved.

But he, with placid brow and modest smile,
Said to the jailor he had ever loved,
And who had learned to love him long ago:

"If all the pangs endured on earth to-day,
If all the pains of all the centuries
Were brought at once to plague my racking nerves,
If all the woes that man has ever felt,
If all the frights that man has yet appalled,
If all the beasts and serpents from the wood,

If all the swords that war has e'er unsheathed,
If all the storms that yet have wrecked the earth,
If all the fiends thus far let loose from hell,
And more that never yet have darkness seen,
Should charge on me, within the self-same hour,

"And then a gate of refuge should be swung,
That opened wide in fair and restful lawns,
Where honor, love, and safety beckoned me,
And it were said, 'Possess this paradise,
When you the Christian faith will fling aside,'
Then would I crush that gate forever shut,
And turn and face the horrors!"

Calmly fierce
The headsman stood, with newly whetted sword.
The multitudes were herding all around,
Were thatching house-tops with their shadowy forms,
Were crowding here and there upon the paves,
Were peeping 'twixt the stolid soldiers' heads.

The martyr stood, as calm as if once more
In safety 'mongst his native Syrian hills;
His face was pale, but all his nerves were iron.

A glance he gave within the headsman's eyes,
Begged him to take the treasure of a crown,
And prayed for him, and then for all the world,
And looked a last adieu to eyes that wept,
Then murmured, "Christ, have I not done the task
Thou gavest in the desert? Send me rest."

Then gazed he in the blue-eyed summer sky,
Then maybe saw what Stephen once had seen;
Then waited for the sword to ply its trade.

But now there stepped within the open square
A stately woman, beauty's treasurer.
The bloom of youth had left a heritage
Of richer tints upon the regal face;
Her eyes two dreamy prisoned moonbeams were;
Thought had not wrinkled, but had shaped her brow,
And added unto girlhood's winsome charm
The sweet stability of womanhood.
Her form had snares for every wayward sense;

She was a maiden's promise, half-expressed,
Thrice o'er fulfilled in wondrous harmony;
And all the pain and sorrow of her life
Had added tribute to her loveliness.

The saint stood gazing at his dangerous guest,
As one who might a radiant spectre see;

No contrast could be greater than was this:

The woman, Beauty's most resplendent queen,
Whose soul and body grew in symmetry,
With Art and Nature friends, and friends to her;
And this shrunk man, whose thin and bloodless frame
Had jostled 'mongst the wreckage of the sea,
Had blushed beneath the jailman's biting whip,
Had dried within the prison's fetid air,
Until his luminous and godlike soul
Would cramp and crouch within that mean abode,
If matter governed spirit!

So was he
Divorced from all of manhood's proper grace,
So true a badge of utter sacrifice,
So worn and rent a human battle flag—
This beauteous woman pitied and adored.

Her heart yearned toward him with a mighty throb,
Her soul reached out its dazzling arms for his—
She loved him even for lack of loveliness!

She took the noble convict by the hand,
And gazed into his eyes; he felt a thrill
In all his veins—through every startled nerve,
As if his wearied being had a draught
Drawn from the very wine-press of a soul.

And when she spoke 'twas in the sweet old tongue,
Such as his childhood's senses first had learned,
When sunned within his mother's loving smile.
It sounded like a silver rivulet
Discovered flowing down some desert rock.

The Heavens above him closed, as with a crash;
They shut so tight, and seemed so far away,
He doubted if he e'er had looked at them.
He only saw the woman at his side,
He only felt the pressure of her hand,
He only heard the music of her tones.

"Come with me, loved one," said the gentle voice:
"Come to the grand old faith in which we knelt
And took Messiah's blessing, years ago!"

The old-time love rushed swiftly back to him;
The mountain city, with its sacred streets,

"'BROTHER, YOUR HELP!'"

Its temples and its sweetly haunted nooks,
Was pictured like a mirage to his gaze;
And all the human of his nature rose
And joined the party of the pleading one.

She took his hands and pressed them to her heart;
And gently drew him toward the boundary
That ran along the solemn square of death.

The soldiers parted; she had come with power
To lead the convict into safety's path,
If but he would abjure the Christian faith.

'Mid all the snares and dangers of his life,
'Mid all the wars in which his soul had led,
'Mid all the subtle and voluptuous traps
That Satan's mistresses had set for him,
He had not wavered yet.

But now had come
A sweet, good woman—sent to show how man
E'en at his best is nought without his God.

He reeled before the chaste and beaming eyes,
The dignified but passion-stirring form,

The shapely, white, but warm and thrilling hands,
And all alive with patient love for him,
And all so full of memories of the past;

Then walked with her e'en to the farthest bound,
And trembled and grew white — then knelt and
prayed:
"O give me, Thou who quaffed the bitter cup,
The strength to put this nectared one away!"

Again the azure gates of Heaven were swung;
Again he stood erect before his Lord—

But did not turn away from her he loved:
He bent to her and whispered, "Fare you well;
Sweet one, behold the sacrifice I make:
To leave the human passion of my life!—
The love that I have cherished 'gainst the years,
For which I would have left all things but one,
Shall, as I crush it to the dying earth,
Become a weeping witness of The Cause!
Remember, loved one, still I wait for you;
Not in the misery of bonds and chains,
But 'mid the thrones of Heaven; — still follow
me!"

Then, with a smile upon his face, he turned
And shouted, in a voice whose echoes fell
Like silver 'gainst the white walls of the air,
"Brother, your help!" and in a second more
His head came crashing to the honored earth—
His patient soul went flying to its God.

THE END

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